



2.0 Project Summary

The Northern California Regional Land Trust (NCRLT) is requesting **\$146,640** over two years to conduct coordinated outreach with collaborating, local watershed conservation groups in Butte and Tehama counties. Anticipated results include significantly increased stakeholder awareness and the permanent protection of private lands within the upper reaches and areas adjacent to the headwaters of ten prominent creeks contained within the Tehama Land Formation. These creeks include Battle Creek, Paynes Creek, Antelope Creek, Mill Creek, Deer Creek, Pine Creek, Big Chico Creek, Little Chico Creek, Cherokee watershed, Butte Creek, and Lower Feather/Honcut Creek (please see figure).

We are not requesting direct acquisition funding in this proposal. Instead, Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) funding will increase the capacity of NCRLT and several cooperating watershed groups to promote and facilitate watershed conservation and the protection of priority properties through conservation easements. Upper reach and headwater properties are crucial to the integrity of the Tuscan region due to their ecological and hydrological values. Private lands in this region are invaluable for the connectivity and linkages they provide to the landscape. In coordination with watershed groups and government agencies, this project will further both NCRLT's *Wildland Protection Program*, and regional land conservation priorities that include riparian and montane landscapes at the higher elevations.

Several watershed groups currently monitor water quality and organize stakeholders within the Tuscan region. These include the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy, Tehama County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD), Mill Creek Conservancy, Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy, Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance, Little Chico Creek Watershed Alliance, Cherokee Watershed Alliance, Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy, and the Lower Feather River/Honcut Creek Watershed Group. These organizations, typically with very little funding and/or resources, actively promote watershed-based restoration, invasive species removal, and advocacy through community participation and collaboration. SNC funding will significantly increase these groups current ability to promote conservation in their respective watersheds. More importantly, capacity funding will help move these organizations towards becoming more viable and self-sustaining into the future.

The Tuscan Headwaters Project will also significantly increase NCRLT's capacity to engage stakeholders in the upper reaches of ten prominent creeks, and facilitate the permanent protection of key watershed properties. Permanently protecting private lands within the upper reaches and areas adjacent to the headwaters of these creeks will help ensure that water quality remains high for fish and wildlife resources, recreation, agriculture, and the recharge of the Tuscan Aquifer.

Capacity funding from SNC will enable NCRLT and several watershed partners to make significant contributions to SNC's program areas by improving watershed health, conducting environmental and natural resource education and enhancing water quality monitoring efforts. Additionally, the protection of these creeks would benefit a number of important natural resources, including, but not limited to, the Tuscan Aquifer and several federal and state endangered and threatened species including several runs of Chinook salmon, and Central Valley Steelhead.